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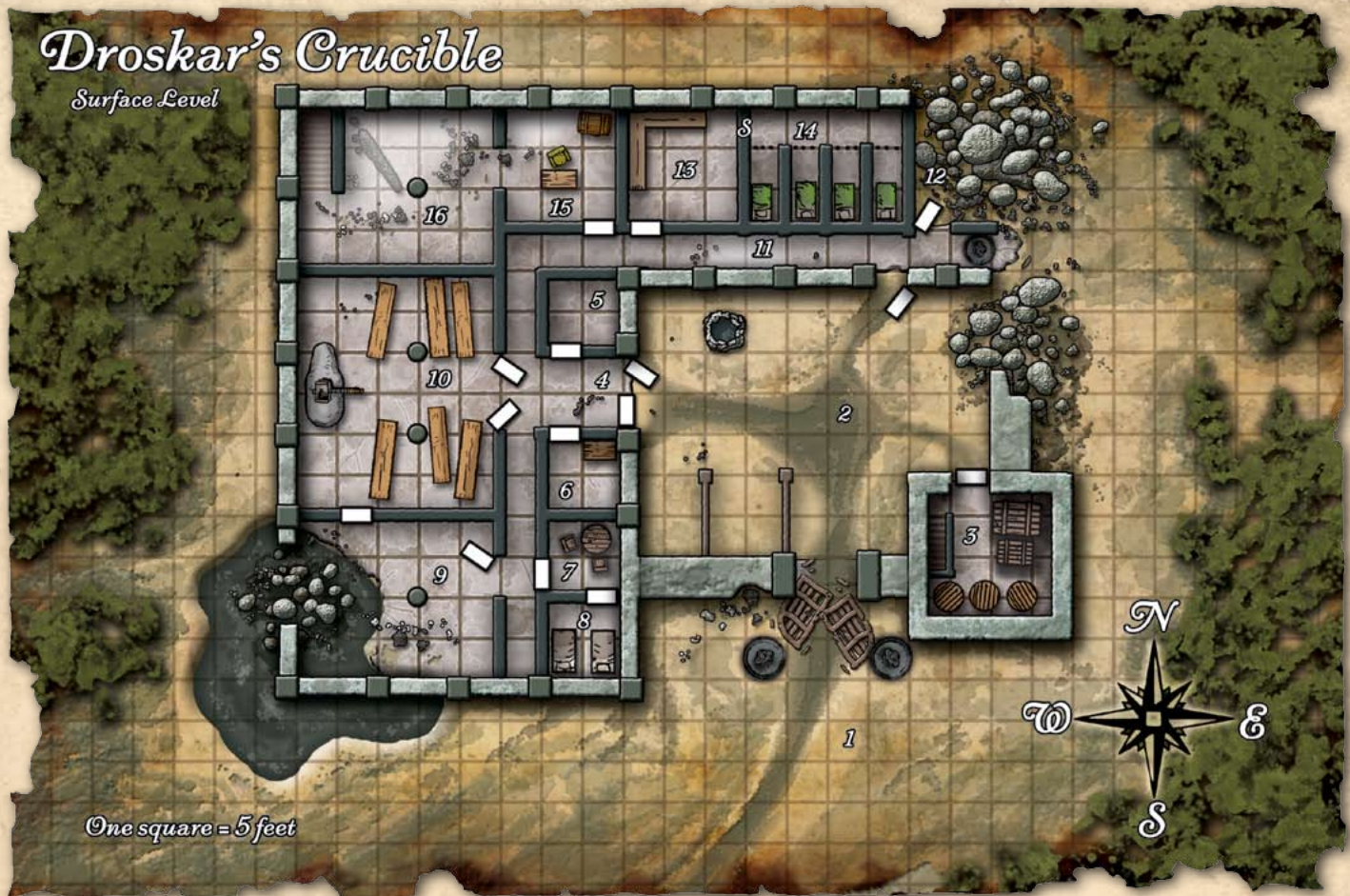
GAMEMASTERY

MODULE



HOLLOW'S LAST HOPE

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HOLLOW'S LAST HOPE

GAMEMASTERY MODULE D0
WILDERNESS AND DUNGEON ADVENTURE

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Hollow's Last Hope is a GameMastery Module designed for four 1st-level characters. By the end of this module, characters should reach 2nd level. This module is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game. The OGL can be found on page 16 of this product.

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HOLLOW'S LAST HOPE

The small village of Falcon's Hollow is a wild place. Nestled in the shadow of Droskar's Crag, the people of Falcon's Hollow are hearty and stern. Theirs is a life of hardships, broken only occasionally by a handful of festivals and the infrequent merchant caravan.

They face constant adversity from both the wilderness and the wiles of man. Wolves nip at their heels and cutpurses ply at their pockets. It is a testament to their strength that they even manage to survive at all.

—Pathfinder Chronicles

Hollow's Last Hope is a wilderness and dungeon adventure designed for four 1st-level characters. Characters who successfully complete this adventure should reach 2nd level by its conclusion. This adventure can be used as a prequel to the GameMastery Module D1: *Crown of the Kobold King*.

This module is a combination of wilderness exploration through the Darkmoon Vale and dungeon delving in the surface ruins of an ancient dwarven monastery. Since time is a factor, Game Masters (GMs) should familiarize themselves with the rules for overland travel before beginning this module.

Adventure Background

In the past week, numerous residents of Falcon's Hollow have fallen ill, each suffering from the same hacking affliction. Local remedies prove as useless as prayers at the Church of Iomedae, goddess of valor, justice, and honor, and already at least one town elder has been claimed by the wheezing death.

Fortunately for Falcon's Hollow, a canny local herbalist named Laurel has traced the

source of the malady to Brookman's well, a small spring on the edge of town, and a rare fungus called blackscour. By banning the use of the spring, the town constabulary hopes to prevent further infection, but such measures offer little respite to those already afflicted.

While Laurel has attempted numerous treatments, she has been unable to cure the disease. She lacks the reagents to brew one last unusual medicine, though all the necessary elements can be found within nearby Darkmoon Vale. Thus far, though, no townsfolk have dared to venture into the wooded reaches and secure the ingredients for this potential cure.

Adventure Summary

Charged by herbalist Laurel to cure the afflicted town, the PCs venture into Darkmoon Vale to secure the ingredients required to cure Falcon's Hollow of the blackscour taint. Along their path, the PCs encounter numerous forest denizens, hints of growing dangers within the woodlands, and the ruins of a dilapidated dwarven holding—the domain of a ferocious, bestial master.

INTRODUCTION

Any number of events might draw the PCs to the small trade town of Falcon's Hollow. Merchant caravans regularly travel here from any number of points abroad, trading for the rare darkwood that grows so abundantly in Darkmoon Vale, and potentially bringing exotic individuals to town as guards or paying travelers. Alternatively, characters might be long-time residents of Falcon's Hollow, young or adventurous souls seeking excitement and opportunity beyond the lumber mills and town's petty intrigues. Local residents might already

know one another as friends or relations, or they might encounter one another as they're individually drawn to seek a cure for the town's affliction (likely either in line at Roots and Remedies or at Laurel's suggestion of cooperation).

If the PCs need encouragement to become involved in the plot of the adventure, a friend, relative, or possibly one of the PCs themselves might come down with blackscour taint. Alternatively, both herbalist Laurel and Sheriff Baleson could put out calls for assistance, drawing on PCs' specific talents, which might lead the PCs to learn of Laurel's more unusual cure.

When you're ready to begin the adventure, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

Perched at the edge of civilized lands, the small town of Falcon's Hollow has always had to rely on itself to solve its problems. Meanwhile, the uncaring lumber barons squeeze the common folk for every last copper, deaf to their pleas. Now the hacking coughs of the sick are heard throughout town. The plague has come to Falcon's Hollow and the town's leaders can't be bothered to stop it.

The Town of Falcon's Hollow

A rough community wholly owned by the local Lumber Consortium, Falcon's Hollow rests on the edge of Darkmoon Vale, a blunt, sawdust-choked stop on a winding trade route. Home to fewer than 1,500 humans and a smattering of other races, most of the townsfolk care only for the paltry coins paid for their backbreaking work and what simple comforts they can buy. A few, however, understand that what's bad for one is bad for all, and so the community thrives on

BEFORE THE KOBOLD KING

Aside from being its own adventure, *Hollow's Last Hope* works well as a prelude to GameMastery Module D1: *Crown of the Kobold King*. GMs interested in running this adventure as part of *Crown of the Kobold King* can remove all elements of the disease afflicting Falcon's Hollow and instead use the encounters in Darkmoon Vale and in the ruins above the kobolds' lair as supplementary encounters. Containing its own complete adventure and extensive details on the town of Falcon's Hollow, Nicolas Logue's *Crown of the Kobold King* is available now at your favorite local game store and online at paizo.com.

a tenacious mix of greed, debauchery, and stubborn self-reliance.

FALCON'S HOLLOW

Town nonstandard (Lumber Consortium); **AL** NE
GP Limit 1,500 gp; **Assets** 40,550 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 1,400

Type isolated (human 94%, halfling 3%, half-elf 1%, elf 1%, other 1%)

AUTHORITY FIGURES

Gavel Thuldrin Kreed, LE male human expert 3/rogue 4 (Gavel of the Lumber Consortium),
Magistrate Vamros Harg, NE male halfling aristocrat 2/sorcerer 5 (Magistrate-Elect), **Sheriff Deldrin Baleson**, LN male half-elf expert 3/fighter 3 (Sheriff of Darkmoon Vale), **Boss Payden "Pay Day" Teedum**, LE male human monk 2/fighter 3 (Overboss of the Lumber Consortium).

The Affliction

At the start of this adventure, several dozen people in Falcon's Hollow have contracted a fungal disease called blackscour taint. While the malady is not exceptionally deadly, poor conditions and a general lack of supplies mean that many of the sick—especially the elderly and young—face mortal consequences. Slowly deteriorating, most of the afflicted can hang on for several more days, but already the weakest have succumbed, with their number growing daily.

Blackscour taint is an ingested disease with an incubation period of 1d3 days. The disease deals 1d2 points of Constitution damage and is resisted with a DC 14 Fortitude save. Those who are infected develop a hacking cough that quickly turns bloody if the disease is allowed to progress.

For the first two days from the start of the adventure, 1d4 townsfolk die from blackscour taint every day. On the third day, 2d4 townsfolk die, then 3d4 on the

fourth day, with the death toll increasing an additional 1d4 every day until a total of forty villagers have perished. If the PCs have acquaintances or loved ones afflicted by blackscour taint (and who lack full NPC statistics), roll 4d10 for each noteworthy relation. If the PCs do not return to town with a cure for the disease by the time the death toll reaches the NPC's number, the specified character dies.

Once forty townsfolk die from blackscour taint, the malady has run its course, killing all those unable to



overcome the disease on their own. If the PCs take up the search for a cure and fail to return to Falcon's Hollow by this time, they are widely shunned and blamed by many for the deaths of their loved ones.

PART 1: AN ELUSIVE ANTIDOTE

Falcon's Hollow has few clerics, and only Lady Cirthana (LG female cleric 2 of Iomedae) shows any interest in stopping the illness and she lacks the ability to cure diseases. Since few townsfolk trust her, most

lay their medical concerns at the feet of the local herbalist, a tough woman named Laurel (NG female human expert 3), whose income stems as much from her sale of snake oils and aphrodisiacs as from questionable cure-alls and bitter teas. As quick to suggest expensive remedies as she is to remind angry buyers that she is not, in fact, a physician, Laurel does her best to help those who come to her in need, but her tight income, need to survive, and pride prevent her from admitting failure.

In treating the blackscour taint, as in most cases, Laurel has turned to her grandmother's tome of recipes, cures, and spells for aid. Although the book contains no actual magic, it holds the rooted wisdom of generations of Laurel's family, including the teachings of the Witch of Darkmoon Vale, Ulizmila, from whom Laurel's grandmother learned in exchange for her sight. There's one last treatment from the cultic appendices of the tome—scribed in a hand that is not Laurel's grandmother's—that the herbalist has yet to try, as she lacks three of the most important ingredients and would rather do what she can for the sick with what she knows than chase a fanciful salvation.

How the PCs come to entreat Laurel for aid is largely up to the GM. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check or merely inquiring with any of the families of the afflicted reveals that Laurel is aiding the families of the sick as best she can—although her proscriptions are little more than bed rest and a pungent black urdroot tea. Nearly anyone in town can direct the PCs to Laurel's shop, the unmistakably named Roots and Remedies. The line stemming from Laurel's shop makes a useful first-time meeting place for unacquainted PCs.

Roots and Remedies

Creeping ivy and full window boxes cover the façade of the rugged-looking, two-story shop bearing the faded sign "Roots and Remedies." A line of twenty-some somber townsfolk—some with pale, wheezing children, others seeming

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to be precipitously near tears—stretches from the open door.

Laurel's shop has been besieged since the outbreak of blackscour taint, both by the afflicted and their families and by hypochondriacs of all stripes. While she tries to help those with legitimate concerns as best she can, she has no qualms in selling the deduced her most expensive balms.

Unless the PCs attempt to bypass the line—an act that might touch off a small, hacking riot—it takes nearly an hour to reach the door of Roots and Remedies. Once inside, the clutter and disrepair of the shop shows the recent traffic, and Laurel visibly overworks herself at the store's rear, brewing remedies for the ill.

The smell of burnt earth and spicy incense chokes the air of the cramped, mud-tracked shop. Bunches of dried herbs hang from the ceiling, along with dangling pots, presses, alchemical apparatuses, and glassware of more arcane purposes. Pouches of rare plants, jars of colored glass, and all manner of dried, preserved, and jellied animal parts fill high shelves and tables doing double duty as displays and workspaces. In the shop's rear, a rail-thin woman with severe-looking spectacles and hair pulled back tightly busies herself between an overpacked rack of herbs, a table covered in stray powders and measuring equipment, and a pot loudly bubbling over with thick gray froth. Over the din of her work and without looking up, the woman impatiently shouts, "And what's your problem?"

The PCs are free to converse with Laurel as they please and she can tell them anything they need to know about the blackscour outbreak, how many people are afflicted, and—especially—how it's not her job to treat every cut and scabbed knee the daft people of Falcon's Hollow come crying to her about.

Initially dismissive if the PCs don't present themselves as customers or capable assistants, she eventually comes around and tells the PCs what she knows about the taint. Even if the PCs seem honestly willing to help, she might not even think to mention the untried medicine until the

characters are about to walk out the door, calling them back at the last moment.

While conversing with Laurel, she answers some of the most likely questions as follows:

What is blackscour? "Just a fungus that's not good for anything. Hard, bitter, and sharp, it likes the water and gets you sick if you drink it down. Never heard of it growing around these parts, though, until now."

What is blackscour taint? "It's a sickness, almost like any other, but you get the mold growing in you. It starts eating away in your chest and belly and is damned determined to stay. Your body near turns itself inside-out trying to hack the stuff up, but all that does is cuts your guts up... bad."

How many townsfolk have blackscour taint? "More than thirty, honestly, though at least three times that thinks they've got it."

Is there any cure? "Not around here. I'll get these folks what I can and we'll see what good it does."

There's another medicine? "My grandmother's book has a brew in it that says its good for this kind of thing. A weird concoction that sounds more like hoojoo than real medicine."

What's in this medicine? "Some rare roots and concentrations, most of which I have here, but there's three I don't. Elderwood moss, which I've never heard of, but granny says the stuff only grows on the oldest tree in a forest. A specially pickled root called rat's tail, again, sounds like hoojoo to me. And seven ironbloom mushrooms, stunty little things that only grow in dark places thick with metal, a favorite among dwarves, or so I hear."

Do you know where we could find these ingredients? "Well, for the elderwood mold, there's gotta be an oldest tree in the vale. Damned if I know where it is, though."

"The rat's tail and mushrooms are even longer shots. Way north, toward the mountains, people say there used to live a bunch of dwarves. They're not there anymore, but I'd bet their forges are. If you can find ironbloom anywhere around here, that'd be your best bet."

"As for the rat's tail, who knows? Well. Actually. Ulizmila, the witch that lives deep in the woods might. She's a crafty, mean thing that knows all sorts of strangeness. She might even have one. I don't know what

she might want for it, but I doubt it'd come cheap. My grandmother traded her sight to the old crone for a few pages of what she knew, and that was years and years back, and I don't know a soul who got any nicer as they got older."

How much time do we have to get the ingredients? "None! Folks are dying every day! All we can hope to do now is treat who we can and hope to save the gravedigger some work."

Can you pay us for finding these ingredients? [Outraged] "Pay you!? I'll pay you in...! Well, I suppose I'm not doing all this for free either. If nothing else, this whole thing's been good for business. How about this, you come back with everything I need to brew the medicine and I'll cut you in: thirty gold each. Fair?"

She can be bargained up to 45 gp each with a successful DC 15 Diplomacy check.

Although Laurel has an idea of where the ingredients for her medicine might be found, she's never set foot beyond the fringes of Darkmoon Vale and honestly has no idea where the locations she mentions are. If the PCs seem committed to searching, she suggests they head to the Consortium Lumber Camp to the east and look for Milon Rhoddam—the most experienced woodsman in the Lumber Consortium.

MAPPING THE VALE

At some point, the PCs are going to need to determine where in Darkmoon Vale to search for the ingredients to create Laurel's cure. Of greatest interest are: Ulizmila's hut, the oldest tree in the vale, and the dwarven ruins. PCs familiar with the area might be able to make the following Knowledge checks to know where these sites lie. If they lack these skills, the PCs can question Milon Rhoddam at the Consortium Lumber Camp.

Location	Knowledge Check and DC
Ulizmila's Hut	Geography DC 16, Local DC 20
Eldest Tree	Geography DC 20, Nature DC 24
Dwarven Monastery	Geography DC 16, Local DC 20

PART 2: DARKMOON VALE

The PCs should be compelled to plot their own journey to and through Darkmoon Vale, choosing their path as they see fit. Unless a PC rolls high on a Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local) check, it's likely they'll need to make a stop at the Lumber Consortium's main camp (see the Mapping the Vale sidebar).

The entire journey, from Falcon's Hollow to the lumber camp, to various forest locations and on to the old dwarven ruins, is just over 37 miles in length. Assuming the group moves at a speed of 30, the entire journey takes a little more than three days, plus any time spent exploring or days spent resting. This time increases to five days if the group's speed is 20. Crossing the water on the return trip cuts it down to only 22 miles but requires a treacherous swim or the construction of a crude raft.

While the PCs are exploring the vale, roll on the following chart to generate a random encounter once per day.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN DARKMOON VALE

Roll	Encounter	EL
1	Foul Tracks	—
2	Dead Fey	—
3	Woodsmen	—
4	Glowmold	—
5	Wyvern Sighting	—
6	Kobold Shaman	1/4
7	Giant Mosquito	1/2
8	Hunter's Snare	1
9	Giant Moorsnake	2
10	Wolves	3

1. Foul Tracks: A DC 18 Spot check reveals a set of deep, goat-like tracks. A character with Track can determine that whatever made these depressions walks upright, and can easily follow them. The tracks only persist for approximately 50 feet before mysteriously disappearing.

2. Dead Fey: The PCs happen upon a dead tree streaked with multicolored fairy blood.

Three sprite-like creatures, known as keld piskies, are pinned here, their exsanguinated bodies turned to gnarled wood. A DC 16 Knowledge (nature) check identifies these creatures, while a DC 14 Knowledge (local) check recalls dubious stories about fairy blood being used to turn lead into gold.

3. Woodsmen: Three inexperienced and slightly drunk human hunters travel the forest, trapping rabbits and tracking larger game, specifically dunlied (see the Forest Fauna sidebar). If the PCs get lost or are looking for directions, these woodsmen can point them back to their path with somewhat questionable expertise.

4. Glowmold: The undersides of several large rocks deep in the forest are covered in rare, glowing mold. A character who makes a DC 16 Survival check can harvest enough of the mold without destroying it to serve as a light source. Once removed from the rock, the mold continues to glow with the brightness of a torch for 3 days.

5. Wyvern Sighting: Any character who makes a DC 20 Spot check notices an ominous shadow and looks up quickly enough to see a hunting blue wyvern soar low over the tree tops. Unless the PCs specifically (and especially loudly) attempt to attract its attention, the wyvern does not notice them.

6. Kobold Shaman: Kolmokmurk was the former shaman of the kobolds who now lair beneath the dwarven monastery. He was exiled after he drank a potion that killed him and animated him as a zombie. The zombie kobold now wanders the forest, thoughtless and aimless, attended by Creeper, his dutiful rat familiar (who now lives in his skull). He wears a crude wood sign bearing the word "shaman" in Draconic.

7. Giant Mosquito: A giant mosquito (with the same stats as a stirge) crosses the path of the PCs and attempts to soundlessly attach itself to the character walking in the rear. The disgusting insect flees if it takes any damage.

8. Hunter's Snare: Grung Knifetongue (see area D) laid a number of dangerous traps about the woods. Along an overgrown deer trail, he set a camouflaged pit trap (see DMG, 70), covered in leaves and supporting the form of a dead rabbit.

9. Giant Moorsnake: An ophidian predator crosses the path of the PCs (same stats

as a constrictor snake). During the day, the moorsnake is too lethargic to attack and merely slithers away. At night, though, it might slip into camp and attempt to constrict a sleeping PC.

10. Wolves: Two wolves in the service of Grappelt (see Part 3) patrol the far reaches of their master's claimed territory. They viciously attack the PCs on sight, but both flee if either is reduced to fewer than half hit points, returning to the monastery to inform their worg master.

A: Lumber Consortium Camp

The Lumber Consortium Camp cuts an ugly scar of stumps into a dense stand of proud dark-wood trees. Five sturdy-looking log buildings—seemingly a bunkhouse, meal hall, office, barn, and smithy—stand with numerous wide carts and sleds amid the sawdust-covered clearing.

Owned and operated by the local Lumber Consortium, the camp appears as callous and unrelenting as the men who work it. Visitors without direct business with the camp foreman are typically sent packing by the first band of surly loggers (CN male human warrior 1/expert 1) they encounter. If the PCs come inquiring after woodsman Milon Rhoddam, their requests are ignored by the workers unless they succeed at a DC 16 Diplomacy or Intimidate check. PCs who inquire after the camp foreman, Jarlben Trookshavits, are taken to his filthy office, thickly decorated with taxidermies of fierce forest animals. The impatient foreman sends for Rhoddam if the PCs succeed at a DC 14 Diplomacy check or pay the man 5 gp.

Milon Rhoddam (N male human expert 2/ranger 2), a blunt, quiet man, is one of the most experienced wanderers and woodsmen in the region. His nephew has taken ill with blackscour taint and, if the PCs explain they're trying to find reagents to brew a cure, he gladly sketches them a rough map of the forest, marking the location of where he believes Ulizmila's hut, the oldest tree in the forest, and the dwarven ruins stand. Should more than thirty townsfolk die before the PCs return, Rhoddam's young nephew is among the dead, and the canny tracker holds them responsible, possibly seeking revenge at a future date.

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B. Bait (EL 1)

This encounter occurs the first time the characters draw near the river or lake. PCs passing near this area must make a DC 16 Listen check to hear an animal's whimpering a short distance away.

Not far from the edge of the forest-shrouded lake, a fox with large ears and bright orange fur lies bleeding, its hindquarters caught fully in the jaws of a crude iron trap.

Although the fox here has obviously been snared by a hunter's cruel trap, the beast's cries are part of a ploy meant to lure greater prey. The hobgoblin poacher Grung Knifetongue lies in wait, hoping the fox's cries attract a Darkmoon wolf, one of the giant moorsnakes from the lake, or other curious passersby, like the PCs.

The fox lies on the grassy shore of the lake or river, some 10 feet from the water

and 20 feet from the forest. Knifetongue has set up his hiding spot 50 feet to the north-east of his trap, just within the trees.

PCs who attempt to remove the fox from the trap can do so by succeeding at a DC 14 Strength check. The pitiful animal puts up no resistance.

Creatures: Grung Knifetongue, a gray-skinned hobgoblin with a prodigious cleft palate, lurks in the nearby tree line, watching over his catch with his bow and waiting for greater prey.

GRUNG KNIFETONGUE CR 1/2

Hobgoblin War 1

hp 6; MM 153

TACTICS

Before Combat Grung hides nearby, taking 10 on his Hide check (for a total of 18 including penalties for distance). Those who fail to spot him are surprised when he attacks.

During Combat Grung has a shortbow instead of javelins and fires every round at the PCs,

while his razorcrows attack.

Morale If Grung takes any amount of damage or if the PCs close to within 20 feet of him, he leaps from his perch (10 feet up in the trees) and attempts to flee.

RAZORCROWS (2) CR 1/3

hp 4; MM 273 (hawk)

TACTICS

Morale The razorcrows fight to the death.

The fox is a Darkmoon firefoot, a species of fennec unique to this region (see sidebar). The firefoot is badly injured, its hindquarters slashed by the hobgoblin's trap. If left alone, it dies in days. A character who saves and treats the fennec, though, can nurse it back to health in two weeks (or one week with a DC 14 Heal check). If the character attending to the firefoot has either wild empathy or succeeds at a DC 14 Handle Animal check, the fox remains with the PC after it is healed.

C: The Forest Elder (EL 2)

The dense trees and thick brush of the forest give way, parting seemingly in respect for the titanic darkwood tree that dominates this clearing. Several times taller than a temple minaret, in one direction the obviously ancient tree reaches into the sky with branches like a giant's arms, while in the other it plumbs the earth with roots thicker than a man's waist. Its limbs broad and strong, its bark thick and so richly colored as to almost be black, and its leaves the size of bucklers, the giant thing is less a tree and more a cathedral of boughs and branches.

This elder darkwood tree is the most ancient of its kind in Darkmoon Vale. Said to have been carried as a sapling from the Hissing Jungle and planted here in the distant past by Deirzir, the Eagle of The First Way, himself, the druids that once guarded the forest claimed this darkwood to be the root from which all Darkmoon grew.

The clearing is roughly oval, 180 feet from north to south and 110 feet from west to east. The elder darkwood has a trunk 30 feet in diameter, with low, easy to climb branches (DC 12 Climb check) that extend 35 feet from the trunk in every direction. A persistent character could eventually scale the tree's nearly 300-foot height, gaining a commanding view of the entire forest. Any character who climbs the tree may make

a DC 14 Spot check to notice three bodies hanging in the high limbs (see treasure).

Despite its serene nature, the glade is not without danger.

Creature: A rare dragonkin known as a tatzlwyrms makes its lair in the branches of the massive darkwood here.

TATZLWYRM

CR 2

hp 22; see the appendix

TACTICS

Before Combat When the PCs enter the glade, the tatzlwyrms is hiding amid the tree's leaves and branches near its trunk. It should be considered to have taken 10 on its Hide check and, thus, PCs must make a DC 23 Spot check to notice the beast and avoid surprise.

During Combat When the PCs approach, it charges from the tree, using its pounce ability and trying to grapple its victim.

Morale If reduced to 7 or fewer hit points, the tatzlwyrms attempts to flee.

Treasure: A DC 12 Search check focusing on the elder darkwood's trunk reveals a small patch of elderwood moss Laurel described. The growth is easily collected by even the most unskilled hand.

Those who investigate the bodies in the elder darkwood find the corpses of three hunters who went missing from Falcon's Hollow months ago, killed by the tatzlwyrms when they happened upon the grove. Although the bodies have been stripped of

nearly all their flesh, the woodsmen's equipment still dangles from their half-devoured carcasses. Those who search the bodies find the following items remain in useful condition: two crossbows, two short swords, a suit of hide armor, a masterwork shortbow, a signet ring with the image of a flaming hawk (worth 5 gp), 9 gp, 12 sp, and eight days' worth of rations.

D: The Hag-Haunted Hollow (EL 2)

The sounds of the forest become suddenly distant as the trees part, opening into a small, almost perfectly circular glade. The nearest stands of pine, eyn, and darkwood—all typically sturdy woods—twist away from the clearing, as if bent by some impossibly strong wind or seemingly in an attempt to flee despite their paralyzed roots. At the glade's center squats an ugly cottage, little more than a pile of twigs, shoots, and ivy stacked upon mud walls. From the thatched roof dangle bundles of gnarled roots, old dried beast carcasses, and knucklebone bangles, all clattering together like gruesome wind chimes. A dozen small thatched fetishes—each shaped like a tiny man, imp, or rearing serpent—stand propped in the yard, keeping guard before a rickety plank door.

Years ago this cottage was home to the witch Ulizmila, a wise woman, practitioner of the old ways, and local boogiemane. While some said she was a monstrous hag and great, great granddaughter of Baba Yaga herself, the deathless Witch Queen of the North, others knew her as a harsh but wise sage willing to share her wisdom for strange and often morbid prices. Although her works still spoil in this glen, Ulizmila is long since gone.

This clearing is roughly 120 feet in diameter, with a dilapidated, circular, 15-foot cottage at its center. Fourteen unnerving but harmless 3-foot-tall scarecrow-like effigies are propped-up throughout the glade. Anyone who approaches the cottage can see that its moldering door has rotted off its hinges but still blocks the way within. Any character who makes a DC 10 Strength check can easily heft aside the barrier.

Inside, the cottage is dank, reeking, and filled with shadows. Haphazardly hung

FOREST FAUNA

A number of unusual or unique creatures dwell in the region around Falcon's Hollow and in Darkmoon Vale. Listed here are but a few PCs might encounter along their travels. A DC 12 Knowledge (nature) check identifies any of these creatures.

Dunlied (Brush Colt): A particularly stout breed of small-antlered deer, often trained by foresters as mounts (same stats as light horse).

Giant Moorsnake: Gray and brown patterned aquatic snakes, skilled at hiding amid debris and floating foliage at the edges of rivers and lakes (same stats as constrictor snake).

Firefoot Fennec: Small foxes with large ears and wispy patches of flame-colored fur around their paws (same stats as dog).

Razorcrow: Over-large rooks with distinctive, jagged beaks and unkempt, oily black feathers (same stats as hawk).

Saingrist's Crawler: A breed of angry red and black centipede capable of growing to monstrous size (same stats as any monstrous centipede). Their bites are said to burn like fire.

Slurk: Disgusting, pale subterranean frogs that secrete powerful adhesives (see D1: Crown of the Kobold King).

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shelves line the walls, covered in all manner of clay jugs, clouded bottles, strangely cut rocks, rotted bunches of herbs, and a museum of other crude curios and remnants of a bone grinder's artifice. A rusted iron cauldron, with a mouth nearly 5 feet wide and a depth of at least 3 feet, dominates the hut's single room, its ash-covered surface shaped with a relief of capering fiends and leering devils. Across from the door, against the far walls, stands a high-backed chair made of wicker, the gigantic curved tusks of some monstrous beast, and thousands of human teeth. In the chair sits what looks like a corpse wrapped in filthy burial linens, its form padded with pungent herbs and sprouting patches of thick white mold. This ominous shape is actually only a bundle of branches, mud, and linen, left by Ulizmila to distract trespassers from her home's actual guardian, her pet cauldron.

Creature: The cauldron in the cottage is a unique animated object. It attacks any creature that disturbs Ulizmila's possessions.

ULIZMILA'S CAULDRON

CR 2

N Medium construct

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Listen** -5, **Spot** -5

DEFENSE

AC 14, **touch** 10, **flat-footed** 14

hp 31 (2d10+20)

Fort +0, **Ref** +0, **Will** -5

Defensive Abilities hardness 5; **Immune** construct traits

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee bite +2 (1d8+1)

Special Attacks improved grab (grp +2), swallow whole

TACTICS

Before Combat Ulizmila's cauldron appears to be a perfectly normal cauldron until the objects within the cottage are disturbed, at which point it attacks.

During Combat Ulizmila's cauldron pursues would-be thieves to the edge of the clearing (it can squeeze through the cottage door). If its opponents flee beyond the glade, the cauldron returns to its place within the cottage and remains inactive until the cottage's contents are again disturbed.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 12, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1



SOULSPEAKER

Aura Faint illusion; **CL** 3rd

Slot amulet; **Price** 2,400 gp

DESCRIPTION

This grotesque, amulet-like shrunken head is said to contain the enslaved soul of its former owner. Forced to obey whomever carries it, once per day a *soulspeaker* can repeat a message as if the spell *magic mouth* were cast upon it. The owner must merely hold the 6-inch-in-diameter head and speak his message and the conditions under which the *soulspeaker* should repeat it. While it carries a message, the eyes of the stitched head stretch open, closing as soon as its message has been delivered.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *magic mouth*; **Cost** 1,200 gp, 96 XP

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, Ulizmila's cauldron must hit an opponent of Medium size or smaller with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to swallow the opponent the following round.

Swallow Whole (Ex) When Ulizmila's cauldron begins its turn with a grappled opponent in its "mouth," it can swallow that opponent with a successful grapple check. Once inside, the opponent takes 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per round from the cauldron's wild movements. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light weapon to deal 10 points of damage to the cauldron's interior gizzard (AC 15; hardness 5). Once the creature exits, the stone of the cauldron reforms, closing the hole; another swallowed opponent must fight its own way out. Ulizmila's cauldron interior can hold 1 Medium, 2 Small, 4 Tiny, 8 Diminutive, or 32 Fine or smaller opponents.

Hardness (Ex) Ulizmila's cauldron has hardness 5 due to its deteriorated condition.

Treasure: Due to the volume and disorganization of the cottage's contents, it takes 10 minutes and a DC 14 Search check to locate the rat's tail. Those who attempt to Search without touching any of the shelves' contents—thus avoiding activating the guardian cauldron—can do so, but the Search then takes 20 minutes to perform.

Besides the rat's tail, there are several other items of hidden value in the hut. Any character who spends a minute and succeeds at a DC 14 Appraise check uncovers statuettes and rare stones worth 30 gp. A character who makes a DC 14 Knowledge (arcana) check also uncovers a pouch containing essential salts useful in summoning a familiar. If burnt in such a summoning ritual, these minerals decrease the rite's required gp by half. *Detect magic* reveals a few traces of previously present magical auras, but the only magic item that remains here is a disgusting, shrunken head known as a *soulspeaker*.

PART 3: THE RUINED MONASTERY

After exploring Darkmoon Vale, only one ingredient remains to be found: ironbloom mushrooms. These small toadstools are known to be a dwarven delicacy, and while there are no dwarves living in the area, an old crumbling dwarven monastery sits at the foot of Droskar's Crag. As such, the PCs' only hope of retrieving these mushrooms is to search the ruins on the other side of the Darkmoon Vale.

Unfortunately, predators and worse have taken up residence in the ruined building. One such beast, a rather old and powerful worg named Grappelt, has taken over a large portion of the surface ruins and finds the mushrooms to be a delicious treat. To save the people of Falcon's Hollow, the PCs must brave the ruins of the dwarven monastery and deal with Grappelt and his minions.

Unless otherwise noted, none of the chambers inside the monastery are lit. All of the rooms have 10-foot-tall ceilings at a minimum, but since most open up to the sloped roof above, many reach a height of up to 20 feet. The walls are all stone, with the interior walls being 1 foot thick and the exterior walls measuring at least 3 feet thick. All of the doors are strong wooden doors, and while many are swollen stuck, few are locked.

Monastery History

What is not generally known to the people of Falcon's Hollow is that the dwarves of this monastery turned to depravity and evil long ago. During the fall of their people, these recluses turned to the worship of Droskar, a vile dwarven god of toil. Renaming their enclave Droskar's Crucible, the dwarves toiled until their end, leaving behind a ruined monastery and a sprawling dungeon underneath. Today, little on the surface shows any evidence of this vile worship, as the dwarves kept their true devotion a secret.

This adventure occurs entirely on the surface level. The dungeons immediately below are detailed in D1: *Crown of the Kobold King*. Even more insidiously, another foul presence has taken root in the deeper dungeon levels. The source of this evil and its greater plans are beyond the scope of this adventure.

1. Approaching the Ruins (EL 0 or 3)

Sitting squat at the foot of an imposing mountain, a ruined monastery comes into view between ancient gnarled trees. Made of simple stone blocks, worn smooth with the passage of time, the stout building is falling apart. Sections of the slanted shale roof have collapsed and portions of the outer wall have crumbled. Weeds and wild thorn plants run rampant across the field leading up to the place, leaving only the slightest indication of a path that ends at the ruined front doors. Beyond, an overgrown yard sits in shadow.

The old path that leads up to the ruins ends about 50 feet from the monastery. Before entering the yard, the path passes between a pair of old stone statues. While one of them is little more than rubble, the other is relatively intact. The 5-foot-tall statue is incredibly worn but it can still be made out as a dwarf holding aloft a great stone hammer. Moss and creeper vines cover most of its surface. Removing the vines around the base uncovers an old dwarven inscription that reads "All praise, [this part is defaced]." Unfortunately, the missing name was scratched off a long time ago and is no longer legible. A DC 15 Knowledge (history) check notes that this statue is from the time of the last great dwarven kings, many centuries ago.

Creatures: If the PCs approach the ruins during the day they find the surrounding area free of hazards. A few lone razorcrows roost atop the tower and caw at any who enter their domain. At night, however, a pair of Grappelt's wolf minions can be found wandering the area in search of an easy snack. These wolves do not sleep in the ruins during the day, as the other wolves do, and are only encountered outside at night.

WOLF (2)

hp 13; MM 283

TACTICS

Before Combat If the wolves spot the PCs before combat, they howl loudly as they charge, so as to alert Grappelt of the intruders.

During Combat The wolves single out one

opponent and attempt to set up a flank, both using their trip ability as often as possible.

Morale Each wolf flees into the wilderness if reduced to fewer than 5 hp.

2. The Yard

Tall grasses and chunks of stone debris have all but overtaken this small yard. Off to one side, a wooden stable has collapsed into a mound of rotting timbers and moldy straw. The outer wall on the east side has also collapsed, leaving a ragged hole. Three doors exit into this yard—a pair of double doors to the east, a single door to the north, and a lone door leading into the squat tower in the southeast corner.

This yard was once used by the dwarves for physical training, but now it lies in ruin. Searching the tall grasses reveals a few interesting clues. A well hides in the northwest corner of the yard, with 10 feet of rope dangling into it. The water is more than 30 feet down and is brackish but potable. Lying next to the well is the body of an explorer who came here just one year ago. A DC 15 Heal check reveals that this explorer was devoured by a rather large animal. This explorer fell prey to Grappelt's hunger while trying to retrieve some water.

The ruined stable hides a few ancient bones, but little else of value. A DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check reveals these to be the bones of a pony.

Although the tall grasses obscure most trails, a DC 15 Survival check made by a character with the Track feat reveals faint signs that some creatures do enter the main building through the double doors. Some of these tracks look reptilian while others are clearly made by four-legged mammals. The reptilian trail always leads to the main entrance and then out into the wild while the mammal tracks leave by either the main entrance or through the hole in the eastern wall.

Treasure: Hiding inside a rotting backpack at the base of the well are the remains of a week's worth of trail rations, a set of thieves tools, 50 feet of silk rope, a small coinpurse with 42 gp in assorted coins, and a small blue vial containing a *potion of cure light wounds*. All of this adventurer's other gear was taken long ago.



3. Watchtower (EL 1)

The door leading into this tower is stuck and requires a DC 13 Strength check to open and close. Atop the 30-foot-tall tower is an open trapdoor that leads into the interior.

Thick webs cover much of the ancient crates and barrels stored inside the base of the tower. A rickety wooden staircase ascends along one wall to reach an open trapdoor above.

The wooden staircase leading to the roof of the tower is not safe. Any Medium or larger creature that attempts to climb the stairs must make a DC 10 Balance skill check. Failing this check means that the character cannot ascend. Failing this check by 5 or more results in the staircase collapsing, dealing 2d6 points of damage to the unfortunate character.

Creatures: A rather aggressive monstrous spider dwells in this room, making it one of the chambers that Grappelt avoids. The moment the door opens, the spider drops down to attack. Its webs allow it to move throughout the tower without using the stairs, but do not hinder the PCs movement .

MEDIUM MONSTROUS SPIDER

CR 1

hp 11; MM 288

TACTICS

Before Combat The spider is hiding in its webs, requiring a DC 15 Spot check to notice.

During Combat The spider always attacks the nearest foe, without regard to tactics. The spider chases PCs outside the tower, but not outside the yard.

Morale If in its lair, the spider fights to the death. If in the yard, the spider flees back into the tower if it takes any amount of damage.

Treasure: While the supplies in most of the crates and barrels in this room have long since rotted away, one small crate contains a masterwork shortsword wrapped in oilcloth.

4. Entry Hall

Beyond the double doors is a small dark hall. Littered with mounds of debris and a year's worth of dead leaves, it is clear that a narrow path winds inside.

Both wolves and kobolds from down below occasionally use this chamber to enter or exit the monastery. A DC 20 Survival skill check made by a character with the Track feat reveals that most of the traffic through this area heads north. There is nothing of interest in the piles of dirt and leaves.

5. Waiting Room

The door to this room is stuck and requires a DC 13 Strength check to open.

With a loud crack, the door finally gives way and opens, shattering an ancient wooden chair propped against it on the other side. The room beyond is dark and smells deeply of dust and decay.

This chamber was once used as a waiting room for the monastery's guests. When the end finally came for the dwarves, one of them went into this chamber and imbibed a great deal of poison. His mummified remains rest in the center of the chamber. Wearing the garb of a blacksmith, the dwarf has the shattered shards of a glass vial in one hand and a scrap of ancient parchment in the other. Written in dwarven, the parchment reads, "Forgive me, dark father of the forge, my toils shall never be enough."

Treasure: Tucked into the belt of the long-dead dwarf is a silver light hammer with a religious symbol carved into the head. The symbol can be identified with a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) skill check as that of Droskar, dwarven god of toil and suffering. The hammer is worth 21 gp, but to a collector it might be worth as much as 200 gp.

6. Cloak Room

This small chamber was used to store the traveling cloaks, coats, and hats of visitors to the monastery. Now only a few moth-eaten rags hang on the pegs and a single soiled hat rests on the table.

Treasure: Hiding in the southeast corner of the room is a single ironbloom mushroom. While not enough to save the entire town, the lone mushroom is a promising start. The mushroom can be found with a DC 15 Search check.

7. Guest Quarters (EL 1)

The door leading into this chamber from the hallway is locked. The device is quite ancient and easy to pick, requiring only a DC 20 Open Lock check.

This small chamber appears to be some sort of sitting room, complete with a single table and a pair of chairs, both in relatively good condition.

Resting atop the table is a half-eaten crow next to a crude knife and a cracked mug.

This room is used by Gurtlekep, the kobold scout stationed up here on the surface, as a place to rest and take meals. Gurtlekep has prepared a relatively simple trap for anyone entering his room, as he is quite paranoid about the work and his minions. The crow was the kobold's most recent meal and he is quite distressed if anyone disturbs his leftovers.

Trap: A net strung up near the ceiling holds a number of stones and a small metal anvil, rigged to fall on anyone walking through the door without noticing the trip rope (the door opens out). Each character entering the room must make a DC 10 Reflex save or set off the trap. Those who make it do not necessarily notice the trap. If set off this trap not only harms intruders, but the noise also warns Gurtlekep (area 8) of their presence.

FALLING DEBRIS TRAP

CR 1

Type mechanical

Search DC 10; **Disable Device** DC 15

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect Atk +5 melee (1d6, debris); multiple targets (drops 1d4 pieces of debris on each target in the room)

8. Gurtlekep's Room (EL 2)

This small cramped chamber holds two beds (one of which is covered in bird bones), a small sack, and an array of old tools. The other bed looks recently slept in.

Creature: This chamber is the home of Gurtlekep, a kobold scout sent up from the dungeon below to keep a lookout on the surface. Gurtlekep is here sleeping during the day and is usually out roaming the halls of the monastery at night. If the PCs come here during the day, Gurtlekep is unprepared for them unless they set off the trap in area 7. If it is night, Gurtlekep can be found in area 11, keeping watch on the courtyard.

GURTLEKEP

CR 2

Male kobold rogue 2 (MM 161)

LE Small humanoid (reptilian)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Listen** +6, **Spot** +6

DEFENSE

AC 17, **touch** 14, **flat-footed** 14

(+2 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

hp 9 (2d6)

Fort +0, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities evasion

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk shortsword +3 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged dagger +5 (1d3/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

TACTICS

Before Combat If aware of the PCs,

Gurtlekep hides under the bed, gaining total cover. The PCs can make opposed Listen checks to hear Gurtlekep before he strikes, allowing them to act in the surprise round.

During Combat Gurtlekep uses the cramped space to his advantage whenever possible, preventing others from entering the room. He focuses all of his attacks on the PC with the least armor first.

Morale If dropped to 3 or fewer hit points, Gurtlekep attempts to flee through a hole in the wall leading into the hallway. This hole is 5 feet above the bed, requiring a single DC 10 Climb check to scale. Once outside, Gurtlekep attempts to flee to warn Greypelt and the kobolds below.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +1; **Grp** –3

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills Climb +5, Craft (trapmaking) +5, Hide +12, Jump +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +5, Search +7, Spot +6, Survival +1 (+3 following tracks), Tumble +8

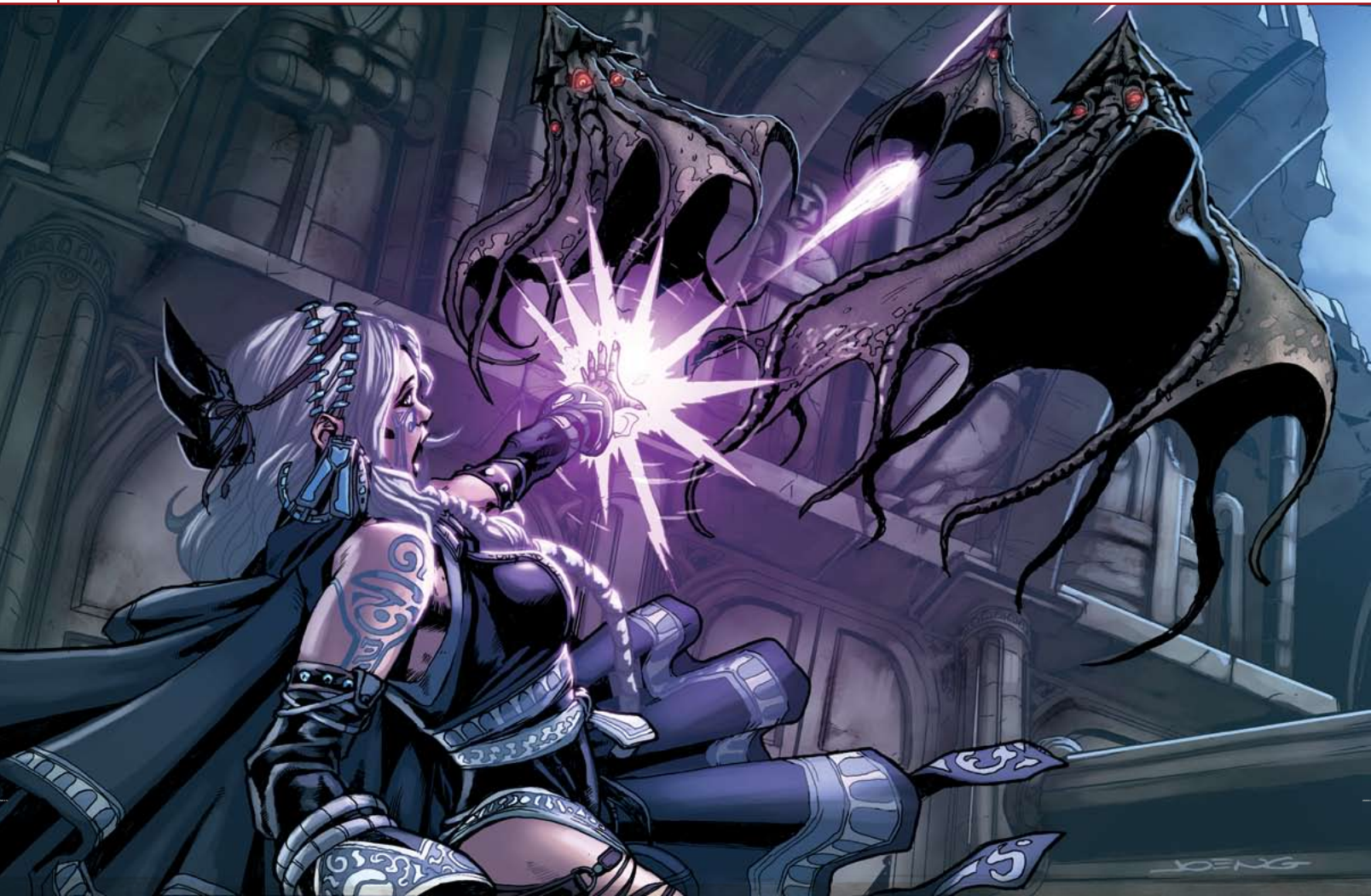
Languages draconic

SQ trapfinding

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*; **Other**

Gear daggers (4), mwk shortsword, leather armor, thieves tools

Treasure: On the spare bed is a complete set of masterwork artisan's tools useful for making Craft (stonemasonry) skill checks. In addition, there is a small sack containing 62 gp in assorted coins and a single ruby gemstone worth 300 gp. Although not magical itself, the gemstone radiates faint conjuration magic if



checked and is one of the missing stones from the altar in area 10.

Development: If Gurtlekep is allowed to flee, he quickly warns Graypelt of the intruders, who dispatches wolves to hunt them down. See area 15 for more details.

9: Ruined Library (EL 1)

The double doors leading into this chamber are shattered and broken, one of them lying on the floor. The room beyond is in an equal state of disrepair. What was once a library is now a shattered mess with one corner being completely collapsed and dominated by a wide pool of stagnant water. Thick fungus grows on most of the books that still remain on the shelves lining the walls.

This room was once the library of the monastery, filled with books on dwarven

lore and history. It has long since been plundered of nearly anything of value and fungus has claimed nearly all the books that remain.

Hazard: The fungus that lines the shelves in this room is hazardous if disturbed. If any of the books are moved or destroyed the fungus lets off a puff of spores that acts like an inhaled poison affecting everyone within 10 feet (inhaled; DC 12; initial 1d2 Con, secondary 1d2 Con). In addition, anyone who takes damage from the spores has strange shadows and fluttering movement appear in the corners of their vision causing them to take a –2 penalty on Spot checks for 1 hour.

Treasure: Atop one of the bookshelves is a single tome that has managed to avoid the destructive fungus. This book is written in Dwarven and contains hymns to Torag, the god venerated here before Droskar.

The book is beautifully illuminated and is worth 100 gp, but might fetch as much as 300 gp if sold to a dwarven collector or cleric. Folded into the last page of the book is a scroll of *spiritual weapon*.

10. Desecrated Shrine (EL 3)

Pews of darkwood lie tipped over and covered in dust on either side of this ancient shrine. At the far end sits a large ceremonial anvil, but its surface is defaced and ruined.

This shrine was once dedicated to Torag, the god of the forge, but when the monastery turned to Droskar's worship, this chamber was defaced and left to rot. The anvil can be identified as an object devoted to Torag with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check. Of particular note is a space atop the altar containing

five small depressions. These depressions once held five rubies. While most of these stones are long gone, one still remains and can be found among the other relics in Gurtlekep's room (area 8). If the ruby is placed in one of the depressions, a wave of positive energy washes out from the altar, hitting everyone in the room and causing an unearthly dwarven choir to spring up from the darkness before fading away. All creatures in the room receive the benefits of a *cure light wounds* spell and a gain +1 morale bonus on attack rolls for 1 hour. While this drains the ruby of its magic, it still retains its intrinsic value.

Creatures: A pair of darkmantles has taken up residence in this chamber and roosts on the ceiling above.

DARKMANTLE (2)

CR 1

hp 6; MM 38

TACTICS

Before Combat On the round before the darkmantles drop down to attack, each one casts *darkness* on a small stone it is holding in one of its tentacles. They wait until the entire group is inside the chamber before dropping down to strike.

During Combat Each darkmantle targets a different foe, attempting to grapple and constrict as quickly as possible.

Morale The darkmantles are in their lair and fight to the death.

11. Hallway

This long hallway ends with a ruined dwarven statue. Smashed long ago, the statue is barely recognizable as a dwarven monk. His stone hammer sits on the ground next to the shattered remains of his head.

Creatures: If the PCs enter the ruins at night, Gurtlekep can be found here instead of his room in area 8. From this hallway he watches the courtyard for any sign of intruders. If he spots the PCs entering the monastery he rushes to warn Grappelt and his kobold brethren who live below (if you are using this adventure as a lead in to *D1: Crown of the Kobold King*). After raising the alarm, he silently stalks the PCs. He waits to strike until they are engaged with another foe, attacking until slain. See area 8 for Gurtlekep's statistics.

12. Infested Ruins (EL 2)

This chamber is entirely shattered, with much of the outer wall and ceiling completely crumbled.

This chamber was once a study for the monks of the monastery. Today it is only home to a swarm of bats that roosts in the remnants of the ceiling above. Note that most of this room is difficult terrain due to the large chunks of stone and debris that litter the floor.

Creature: The bat swarm that lives in this room is relatively harmless unless disturbed. If the PCs make any loud noise in the chamber (such as disturbing the rubble), the swarm descends to attack. The swarm can be spotted beforehand with a successful DC 15 Spot check.

BAT SWARM

CR 2

hp 13; MM 237

TACTICS

During Combat The bat swarm spreads itself out to occupy the space of as many PCs as possible each round.

Morale The bat swarm flees from the monastery if reduced to fewer than 5 hit points. It returns the next dawn to roost in the rafters once more.

13. Armory

Old cobweb-covered racks and armor stands dominate much of this small chamber. What must have once been a well-tended armory is now devoid of arms and armor.

This chamber was pillaged long ago by a group of explorers. A secret door is located in the northeast corner of the room. The secret door can be located with a successful DC 20 Search check.

Treasure: In their haste, the explorers who looted this chamber knocked over one of the bolt cases, spilling its contents across the floor. They gathered up most of the bolts, but 4 of the +1 *flaming bolts* ended up underneath one of the racks and were never discovered. The bolts can be found with a DC 15 Search check or automatically with a *detect magic* spell or similar effect.

14. Secret Prison (EL 1)

The secret door swings open to reveal a short corridor with a wall of bars running down one side. Four rusted doors open in this wall into four cramped cells.

This chamber was built after the monastery's conversion to the worship of Droskar. It was used to house all of the members who did not convert. These unfortunate dwarves were left here to die. The locks on the cell doors have rusted away, making them easy to open.



RING OF TORAG

Aura Faint abjuration; **CL** 3rd

Slot ring; **Price** 1,200 gp

DESCRIPTION

This simple golden ring has a large red gemstone set into it that sparkles with an inner fire. The wearer of the ring gains fire resistance 10 against the first fire attack that hits him that day. This protection renews itself every morning at dawn. In addition, the wearer receives a +1 resistance bonus on saves made against fire spells and effects. The ring must be worn for 24 hours to have any effect.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Forge Ring, *resist energy*; **Cost** 600 gp, 48 XP

HOLLOW'S LAST HOPE

Creatures: While all of the cells contain the bones of long-dead dwarves, three of them are actually skeletons that rise up to attack the characters as soon as they open any of the cell doors.

DWARF WARRIOR SKELETONS (3) **CR 1**
hp 6; MM 226 (human warrior skeleton)

TACTICS

During Combat The dwarf skeletons move to attack the nearest living creature each round. They use their claws, as they have no scimitars. Note that they are wearing leather aprons that grant them a +2 armor bonus instead of a shield.

Morale The dwarf skeletons fight to the death.

Treasure: The only skeleton here that does not animate is from a dwarf that remained pious to Torag during his imprisonment. His skeleton lies in a peaceful posture on his simple straw cot. On one of his hands is the *ring of Torag*, an ancient magic item (see sidebar). Growing inside his ribcage is a pair of ironbloom mushrooms.

15. Wolf Den (EL 3)

This small study looks like it has been lived in recently. Gnawed bones litter the floor and tufts of gray fur can be seen here and there. An old stone desk sits in the center of the chamber, scratched and cracked in many places. The stench of wet fur hangs heavy in the air.

This was once the study of the high priest, where he wrote his upcoming sermons and met with foreign visitors. Today, it is the den of a pair of female wolves, the consorts of Grappelt.

Creatures: The wolves usually sleep behind the desk during the day and are active at night. If Grappelt has been warned of intruders, these two wolves are sent out to find and kill them. In either case, the pair attacks the moment they spot intruders.

WOLF (2) **CR 1**
hp 13; MM 283

TACTICS

Before Combat If the wolves spot the PCs before combat, they howl loudly as they charge, so as to alert Grappelt of the intruders.

During Combat The wolves single out one opponent and attempt to set up a flank, both using their trip ability as often as possible.

Morale Each wolf flees to Grappelt's side if reduced to fewer than 5 hp.

Treasure: The desk is completely empty save for a few scraps of ancient parchment and an old quill. One of the drawers has a secret compartment, though, that can be found with a DC 15 Search check. Inside is a +1 *handaxe*, a small pouch containing 100 pp, and a prayer book. The book is written in dwarven and describes the worship of Droskar. A small note on the inside cover reads "Torag is no longer worthy of our devotion. Only Droskar can deliver us from the failings of King Garbold." The book is worth 50 gp to a scholar interested in dwarven history.

16. Grappelt's Chamber (EL 3)

Gaping holes in the roof allow faint light to enter this ruined chamber. One of the stone columns that once supported the ceiling is toppled, its broken pieces littering the floor. A thick patch of black mushrooms hides in a nearby corner, giving the room an earthy scent that is barely noticeable above the stench of wet fur.

This chamber is the home of Grappelt, the sinister worg who sees himself as the ruler of the surface ruins. Long before Grappelt came to this place, the dwarves used this chamber for storage, along with the basement below. When the dwarves turned to Droskar, the basement below was greatly expanded into a dungeon where the dwarves worshiped in secret. This dungeon is described in *D1: Crown of the Kobold King*. If you are using this adventure alone, the mushrooms are the sole reason the PCs have for coming here and the basement below is just a small empty chamber, save for cobwebs and dust.

Creatures: Grappelt is a cunning foe and recognizes the PCs for a serious threat the moment they enter. With his consorts wounded or dead, he is cautious in dealing with the intruders. His first act is to spring up from out of hiding atop the ruined column, baring his teeth and making an Intimidate check to demoralize them. If the

PCs move to attack, he speaks, demanding to know why they have disturbed his rest. If they tell him of their need, he lies to them and tells them he is willing to let them take the mushrooms (or let them go below if this module is being used as a prelude) if they assist him in ridding the monastery of some of the other monsters. Grappelt knows of all the creatures in the monastery except for the skeletons in area 14 and asks the PCs to slay the darkmantles. When they return from this task, he asks them to slay the bat swarm and then the spider in the tower. The worg hopes that by getting the PCs to fight these other monsters he can weaken them so he can easily defeat them when they finally return.

Regardless of whether or not the PCs accept Grappelt's quest, he has no intention of allowing them to take his prized mushrooms and attacks the moment their guard is down.

GRAPPELT **CR 3**

Male worg warrior 2 (MM 256)

CE Medium magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +5, **Spot** +5

DEFENSE

AC 15, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 12

(+3 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 43 (4d10+2d8+12)

Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4

OFFENSE

Spd 50 ft.

Melee bite +8 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks trip (+2)

TACTICS

Before Combat If the PCs are helping Grappelt rid the monastery of monsters, they must make Sense Motive checks, opposed by the worg's Bluff, to act in the surprise round when he attacks them.

During Combat Grappelt singles out the weak in any combat situation, targeting spellcasters first. He uses Power Attack when attacking such foes but never for more than 3 points. He does not attack prone foes unless he has no other choice or they try to stand.

Morale This is Grappelt's home and he fights to the death to protect it.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 15, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +8

Feats Iron Will, Power Attack, Track

Skills Bluff +5, Hide +5, Intimidate +4, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Spot +5, Survival +1 (+5 when tracking by scent)

Languages Common

Treasure: Tucked behind the pillar are a few things of value hidden by Grappelt, including a bag with 354 gp, a masterwork light crossbow, a *potion of bull's strength*, and a *wand of light* (CL 1st, 28 charges). In the dark corner of the room grows a small patch of ironbloom mushrooms, six in all.

CONCLUSION

After retrieving all the ingredients needed, the PCs can rush back to Falcon's Hollow without much delay. Laurel is glad to see them and immediately sets out to brew the remedy. By that same evening, many of the locals are well on their way to recovery. Laurel pays the characters their due and offers them a discount on any future services. Others in the town take notice of their heroics as well, including Boss Teedum.

If this adventure was used as an introduction to *D1: Crown of the Kobold King*, the characters are free to explore deeper into the ruins beneath the monastery after dealing with Grappelt.

APPENDIX

This module presents a brand new monster, the tatzlwyrms, a smaller wingless cousin of true dragons.

Tatzlwyrms

Slithering like a large snake, this creature has the head of a dragon and a pair of clawed arms to help it move along and grasp prey. A sickly green mist wafts from its open maw.

TATZLWYRM

CR 2

N Medium dragon

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +3

DEFENSE

AC 15, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 13
(+3 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 22 (3d12+3)

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +1

Immune paralysis, sleep

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +5 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks improved grab (grp +5), poison

gasp, pounce, rake +4 (1d2+1)

TACTICS

Before Combat Tatzlwyrms attempt to remain hidden before attacking their prey, preferring areas of dense vegetation.

During Combat Tatzlwyrms attempt to charge as often as possible, using their pounce and rake abilities. Given the opportunity, they grapple their foes and use their poison gasp.

Morale If reduced to 7 or fewer hit points, tatzlwyrms attempt to flee.

STATISTICS

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 5, Wis 11, Cha 10

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5

Feats Alertness, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Climb +10, Hide +7*, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Spot +8; *tatzlwyrms have a +6

racial bonus on Hide checks made in area of dense vegetation.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a tatzlwyrms must hit a Medium or smaller foe with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold.

Poison Gasp (Ex) A tatzlwyrms's breath is poisonous, but not very powerful. While grappling, instead of making a bite or rake attack, a tatzlwyrms can breathe its poison into its victim's face (contact; DC 12; initial 1 Con; secondary —; note that the initial damage is equal to the tatzlwyrms's Con modifier). The save DC is Constitution-based.



HOLLOW'S LAST HOPE

A tatzlwyrms must begin its turn grappling to use this ability—it can't begin a grapple and use its poison gasp in the same turn.

Pounce (Ex) If a tatzlwyrms charges, it can make a bite attack plus two rake attacks.

ECOLOGY

Environment Any forest

Organization Solitary or nest (2–5)

Treasure Standard

Alignment Always neutral

Advancement 4–6 HD (Medium), 7–13 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment +3

A whelp race of dragonkind, tatzlwyrms lurk amid the deepest wilds of the natural world. Although they lack many of the qualities of true dragons—most notably wings and powerful breath weapons—their instinctual cunning and innate ferocity is not diminished by their size. Feral yet patient hunters, tatzlwyrms spend most of their time lying in wait for prey, uncaring of whether it takes the form of deer, wolves, or men.

Possessing the same hoarding compulsion as their better-known draconic cousins, tatzlwyrms collect the remains of their hunts, the eldest accumulating morbid troves of bones and debris. Incidentally, heavily gnawed equipment and forgotten treasures often lie littered among these grim hoards, even although the dragonkin have no use for such wealth.

Innately stealthy and uncomfortable in open areas, tatzlwyrms are rarely seen, and in many regions are thought to be little more than local legends. As such, folkloric rumors persist of their weird abilities and

common haunts, tales only verified when the foolish or unsuspecting intrude upon these aloof creatures' far-flung lairs. It's not uncommon for the residents of isolated communities to attribute the disappearance of hunters or travelers to "The tatzlwyrms getting' em."

Several breeds of tatzlwyrms exist. The most-commonly encountered—although still quite rare—variety lurks amid the tangled hearts of ancient forests, while more elusive wyrms purportedly dwell within mountain crags, treacherous shoals, and deep underground. Although seemingly not intelligent enough to discern the historic importance of such sites, tatzlwyrms are oddly attracted to natural places of great age and primeval strength. What connection these strange dragons might have to these locations, however, remains a mystery.

THE TATZLWYRM

A creature of Austrian, Bavarian, and Swiss descent—related to the German *lindwurm* or Scandinavian *linnorm*—real-world Alpine legends describe the tatzlwyrms ("clawed worm" in German) as a giant salamander lacking rear legs and sometimes exhibiting a feline head. Widely believed in throughout the Middle Ages due to the proliferation of corroborating descriptions and, later, artistic depictions (though the verbal and illustrated reports hold little in common), even Marco Polo described the beast in the account of his travels, *Il Milione*. Although far less common than centuries ago, sightings of tatzlwyrms are still reported today.



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